The Valley Patriot

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Local Heroes Show Valley Spirit

This month The Valley Patriot pays tribute to those on the front lines of the war against the Coronavirus. Above left: GLTS parent liaison Martha Carrasco helps prepare medical supplies to donate to local organizations in need. Above right: nurse practitioners Brooke Butterfield and Sarah Saurman of AFC Urgent Care in Methuen suit up to test patients.

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The Valley Patriot BASH HAS BEEN POSTPONED

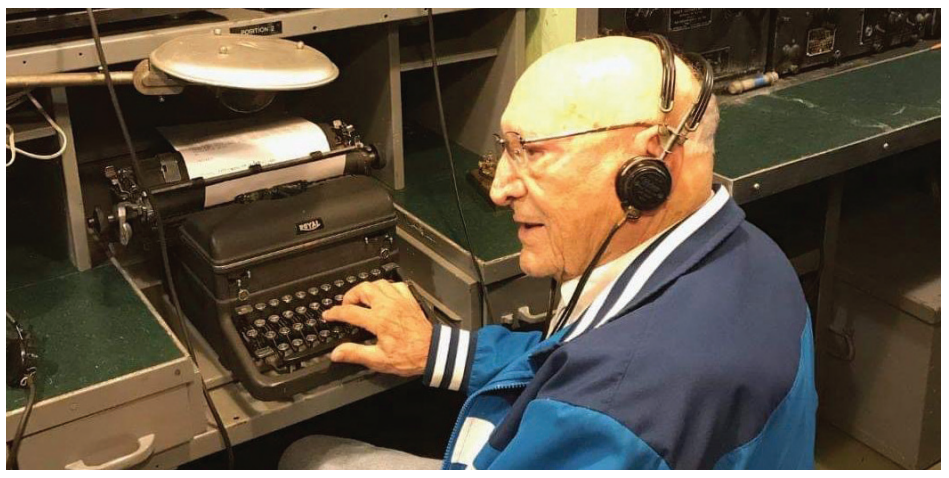
Valley Patriot of the Month

Tony Marino, US Navy Pacific Theater - World War II

John Cuddy
VALLEY PATRIOT HERO REPORTER

PELHAM, NH, New Hampshire's Tony Marino grew up in Chelsea, Massachusetts. He was an athlete at Chelsea High, graduating with the class of 1940. His wife, Loretta, graduated from the same school with the class of 1944.

Tony was attending a family wedding with his mother when the news came in on the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. He recalls the news of the attack came over the car radio while driving his mother to the wedding. Later, gathering at a local social club with his friends and neighbors in Chelsea, the young men were all discussing the attack, talking about enlisting, and what branch that they wanted to serve in. He served during World War II in the Pacific theater, with the US Navy as a Radioman First Class. His wife, Loretta, was trained as a nurse after graduating from high school, back when hospitals, not universities trained nurses. Anticipating huge casualties invading Japan, the US Government paid for Loretta's nursing education.



Consider this fact regarding those anticipated casualties: during World War II, 1,506,000 Purple Heart medals were manufactured, preparing for an estimated 1 million US casualties, that were expected from a planned Allied invasion of Japan in the fall of 1945 or winter of 1946. Today the total number of the combined American military casualties for the seventy years following the end of World War II have not exhausted the supply of Purple Heart medals ordered for the invasion of Japan. This includes totaling up all servicemen and women with injuries or fatalities from all terrorist attacks, wars, and conflicts. Several years ago, I met a man who, during World War II, was an 18-year-old US Marine on a Troop ship, headed to a staging area in preparation to invade Japan. Considering his position, I asked him what he thought of Truman's decision to drop two atomic bombs on Japan. "Greatest president ever" and "I'd vote for Harry Truman today" was his reply!

Tony's first ship, the USS Manlove (DE-36) was an Evarts-class destroyer escort built for the United States Navy during World War II. The Manlove was named after a sailor killed on the USS Arizona (BB-39) during the Pearl Harbor attack. This ship served in the Pacific theater during the war, her mission was to protect convoys and other ships from Japanese submarines and fighter aircraft, earning five battle stars defending Norman Rockwell's "four freedoms".

Designed to hunt and sink enemy submarines, a staggering number were built by the United States in just a few months during World War II with a total construction of 437 ships built to serve as Destroyer Escorts. Veterans of just a few months service on low hull numbers,

HERO: PAGE 21

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Media Hysteria and Scare Tactics Frighten a Nation

Since the beginning of the coronavirus hysteria in this country the news media and even local officials have been only telling you part of the story.

CNN, FOXNEWS and even local news networks have gone 24-7 with doom and gloom predictions about the virus, giving people the impression that if you get the virus you and your family are most likely going to die. That's simply not true.

Local news broadcasts highlight only the sick, showing refrigerated trucks outside hospitals to "store the bodies" as if hundreds of thousands of people have already died from this disease. What they don't tell you is most of those trucks are empty, and only set up because infected bodies cannot be stored in the morgue with non-infected bodies.

Even our local officials announce a daily count of how many people have contracted the virus, but NOT how may have died from the virus, or how many have already recovered. This is driving the fear and panic in our coummunities.

Those numbers are important and the public has the right to know.

As of the day we went to print there were 357,000 cases of coronavirus in the United States.

Only 10,333 people have presumably died from corona.

When you consider the population of the U.S. is 330M people, that means 0.0031% of the country has died from corona.

It also means only 2.89% of the people who have contracted the virus, have died. The rest have recovered or are in the process of recovering from the virus. We are not hearing much about that on CNN.

That's because those numbers do not comport with the message of hysteria and panic the media makes so much money on.

When Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan asked Methuen Mayor Neil Perry what the number of cases were on April 2nd he said aprox.73 people in Methuen had contracted the virus. When asked how many of those have died, the answer was zero.

On April 5th, Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera reported that they had 319 cases of Coronavirus with only two deaths.

That means 0.063% of the people who contracted corona in Lawrence have died.

That's 0.0022% of the population of Lawrence.

It is important that our readers NOT make assumptions about our position on this, and not react out of emotion. We are not saying this virus isn't a threat, or that the coronavirus isn't a serious risk to our health or our nation. We are not saying you should take no precautions. We are not trying to "minimize" the threat risk.

In fact, what we are really doing is showing you the actual threat risk by removing the emotion and fear, ignoring the hysteria, and just looking at the "facts and data" that have been reported.

What we ARE saying is that people are frightened, petrified because of media hysteria and local officials only reporting daily numbers of how many people have contracted the virus, without telling people that so few have died, and so many have already recovered.

In this time of crisis we feel it is of paramount importance that the public be told the full story, good and bad. We believe that when the general public starts to see the real numbers they may begin to stem the panic and give people hope that even if you get this virus, you are most likely going to be OK.

To his credit, after appearing on Tom Duggan's show, Methuen Mayor Perry began to report the daily number of cases along with the number of people who have recovered (but not deaths). Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera also began to report the number of cases with the number of deaths (though not the number of recoveries).

This is a good start. All local officials and members of the media need to follow their lead. The public has a right to know. You deserve the truth, the whole truth, (not just an escalating number of cases confirmed). We are a strong country and we can handle it.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Resource Guide

Rep. Linda Dean Campbell
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

This is a difficult time for all of us, and with so much information circulating, it is important to get your information from official sources written by experts. Visit www.mass.gov/covid19 for guidance and daily updates, call the Massachusetts COVID-19 information line at 2-1-1, or sign up for text alerts by texting COVIDMA to 888-777. While the State continues its critical efforts to slow the spread of COVID-19 and expand our health care capacity, the following resources are in place to help those in need of financial support:

UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

• EXPANDED BENEFITS: The federal CARES Act expands who is eligible for unemployment benefits and increases the amount and duration of those benefits. If you are out of work, you may now qualify for benefits even if you were not previously eligible, including those who are self-employed. You may also be eligible for federal Disaster Unemployment Assistance since the President has issued a disaster declaration for Massachusetts.

• TO APPLY: You must apply through the State for all unemployment benefits. We are awaiting guidance from the federal government on how to implement the new benefits – updates and instructions will be posted here: www.mass.gov/unemployment/covid-19

SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF

• LOANS: the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) is offering Economic Injury Disaster Loans (up to $2 million with the possibility of a $10,000 advance); Paycheck Protection Program loans (up to $10 million with the possibility for some loan forgiveness); and debt relief for 6 months for certain new and existing SBA loans. For more information, visit the SBA's COVID-19 resource guide: https://www.sba.gov/page/coronavirus-covid-19-small-business-guidance-loan-resources

• TAX RELIEF: For small businesses that paid less than $150,000 last year in sales plus meals taxes, or in room occupancy taxes, those taxes due in March, April, and May will instead be due on June 20. The deadline for filing state and federal income taxes has been pushed back to July 15. Further, certain employers may defer paying the employer portions of federal payroll taxes for 2020, and certain employers may receive a refundable payroll tax credit for 50% of each eligible employee's first $10,000 in wages and compensation.

• MORE INFO: Visit https://www.uschamber.com/co/small-business-coronavirus or https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-resources-and-guidance-for-businesses

MORTGAGES & RENT

• HOMEOWNER SUPPORT: The State has urged Massachusetts financial institutions to forbear mortgage payments, waive late fees, not report late payments to credit rating agencies, and postpone foreclosures, all for 60 days. Additionally, homeowners with a federally-backed mortgage cannot be foreclosed upon for 60 days and can request mortgage forbearance for up to 6 months, with a possible extension of 6 additional months without penalties or interest.

• RENTAL SUPPORT: The State will dedicate $5 million for rental assistance (RAFT) to families facing rent insecurity, with additional funding for Section 8 rental vouchers from the federal government. Affordable housing operators have been urged to suspend all non-essential evictions, and any federally-backed property owners cannot file new eviction cases for 120 days. The Housing Court has postponed most eviction hearings until after April 21. For rental assistance, please contact Community Teamwork: https://www.commteam.org/

The State is continuing to take aggressive action to secure personal protective equipment for our health care workers, conduct rigorous COVID-19 testing, quickly grow our health care workforce, and expand the number of hospital beds and ventilators available. Continue to practice social distancing, as the Governor has extended the stay-at-home order and closure of non-essential businesses through May 4. If you begin to experience

JOEL'S METHUEN FOOD CORNER

Great Take-Out While We Stay At Home

Joel Faretra
VALLEY PATRIOT FOOD COLUMNIST

So dining out as we know it is on hold for the time-being. Local bars and restaurants are the backbone of our community.

They sponsor youth programs, donate food to all types of causes, and add life to our city. It is now our time to support them. Some places like Rae Rocks, Fusion House, Fireside, and Methuen Family Restaurant have decided to close temporarily.

Most have chosen to stay open and have completely reconstructed the way they do business.

Third party companies like Doordash, Uber Eats, and Grubhub have made it easier to order take out, but please call the restaurant first and ask if they are delivering themselves to eliminate the fee that they need to pay for the service.

A couple of restaurants are open for breakfast for take-out.

Al's Family Diner (500 Merrimack St., 978-683-0920) is open on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday mornings from 7:30-11:30. They are still cash-only.

The Country Kitchen (18 Hampshire St., 978-687-9632) is open for breakfast until 11:30am during the week, 5am to noon Saturday and open at 6am on Sundays. They are also open for lunch Monday-Thursday 11:30-1:30 and 11:30- 7pm on Friday for "Fish and Chip Friday!"

The Irish Cottage (17 Branch St., 978 208-4347) has opened on Sunday mornings from 9-noon on top of being open from 4-8pm Thursday-Sunday.

A few places are still open for lunch and dinner and handling their own delivery in addition to take out.

Bada Bing (32 Hampshire St, 978-683-0009) is offering their full menu and still giving back to the community. They donated food to TMF (The Movement Family) for the homeless the other night and are always willing to chip in to help.

A few other local places open for lunch and dinner are:

Chris' Famous Pizza
(124 Lowell St. 978-687-2333),
Royal Roast Beef
(464 Lowell St. 978-794-4996),
Wah Sang
(42 Hampshire St. 978-686-4118),
Anthony's Roast Beef
(1111 Riverside Dr. 978-655-1400),
New England Seafoods
(225 Merrimack St. 978-686-7494,

FOOD: PAGE 5

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GLTS Donates 1,400 Pounds of Food, Medical Supplies in Response to COVID-19

The Greater Lawrence Tech has donated more than 1,400 pounds of food to Neighbors in Need and thousands of pieces of medical supplies to area health care facilities since the school closed due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) earlier this month.

Neighbors in Need provides food to people in need throughout the Greater Lawrence area through 13 food pantries. "The COVID-19 crisis has changed so much in recent weeks in our communities, and doing what we can to support each other is critical," Superintendent Lavoie said.

"When we realized we had food that could be donated to those at Neighbors in Need, and medical supplies that could help our health care professionals protect themselves and their patients, we took immediate action."

Greater Lawrence Tech donated 256 pounds of cabbage and carrots the weekend prior to St. Patrick's Day, March 13-14, which was initially intended for a boiled dinner at the school that was cancelled. On Friday, March 20, Greater Lawrence Tech donated additional food from the school's cafeteria and the student-operated Four Winds Restaurant, including approximately 1,200 pounds of fruits, vegetables, dairy products and other perishable items.

"We are grateful for this generous donation of food at a time when the continuation of our food pantries is critical," said Linda Zimmerman, executive director of Neighbors In Need.

"This food will be going right out to the families we serve at our 13 weekly food pantry locations. By Friday, we served 600 families – and we expect this number to climb. To keep up with our evolving pantry schedule go to our website needfood.org"

Greater Lawrence Tech additionally donated 5,000 gloves, 100 Tyvex suits, 400 isolation gowns, 15 boxes of sterile gloves, 100 face shields, 20 respirator masks, 100 N95 masks and cases of medical cleaning wipes to the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center on Friday. The school additionally donated cases of anti-bacterial wipes and safety goggles to Lawrence General Hospital on Tuesday.

"Greater Lawrence Family Health Center and Greater Lawrence Technical School have been strong community partners for many years, and the Health Center currently operates a school based health center site at the school. It goes without saying that this partnership remains strong in meeting the healthcare needs of the students, but also in a time of crisis like this. These items are at all-time premium right now for healthcare providers both locally and nationally, and the needs to protect our staff, clinicians and patients at GLFHC are no different and for that we are most grateful for this donation," said Richard Napolitano, senior vice president and external relations/chief marketing and development officer at the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center.

"Thanks to the generosity of GLTS Superintendent John Lavoie and his outstanding team, our staff and clinicians can continue to provide the care needed by our patients in a safe, protected environment." The donations were made possible by administrators, faculty and staff who volunteered to help package and organize the food and medical supplies. ◊

IN YOUR CORNER with SENATOR DIZOGLIO

Here to Help You During the Coronavirus Crisis

Hello Valley Patriot Readers,

First, I want to reiterate to residents of the Merrimack Valley that my team stands ready to assist you - individuals, businesses, health care personnel, first responders and anyone and everyone needing any assistance. We are here to help answer your questions and ensure your concerns are addressed as we work to get through the COVID-19 response together.

On Beacon Hill, we in the legislature will continue to fight to increase testing, access to personal protective equipment (PPE), medical care and coverage, and resources for our first responders.

Simultaneously we are working to address challenges faced by our hospitals, local businesses, public safety departments, homeless shelters, schools, daycares and beyond - along with the challenges faced by all of the people each sector has employed or served.

The task is great and the legislature and Governor's administration are working together, diligently, to try to find solutions and ways to assist you during these increasingly difficult times.

I am so grateful to those of you who have reached out regarding concerns or gaps in the system that need to be identified and addressed. We must continue to work together. My email is diana.dizoglio@masenate.gov and my phone number here in the district is (978) 984-7747. If you would like to sign up for my email updates, please let us know and we will add you to our email list. Also, my team is continuously updating our social media accounts – on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn - with progress being made at the state and federal levels, as well as local resources and services.

Even if social media is not typically your cup of tea, I encourage you to go online and connect with one of my pages. This is both a way to receive important updates about what is happening at the state level and to respond with any concerns or issues that may need to be addressed. Your voice truly matters.

Regarding the need to stay connected, yes, it is important that we continue to communicate regarding legislation and policies. As someone who was born and raised here in the Merrimack Valley, however, and personally knows many of you as neighbors and friends, I want to use this as an opportunity to remind ourselves to reach out to loved ones and neighbors during these trying times.

We know that people often feel uncomfortable asking for help, or admitting they have a need. Beyond the physical or financial anxiety, many may be experiencing feelings of loneliness and isolation amidst the inability, in many circumstances, to speak to others face to face. Let's look out for one another over the course of this emergency and check in on our neighbors, coworkers, family and friends to let them know they're not alone.

A phone call from someone who cares can be just the thing someone needs but might feel awkward asking for. If you're inclined to call someone to check in with them, follow your instinct and make that call of support - even if it's just to say, "Hello, just checking in and want to let you know that you're important to me, I care about you, and I'm here if you need me."

While many of us have gone through life without the internet and without mobile devices in the past, we haven't gone through life without face-to-face social gatherings and a shutdown of our businesses simultaneously. This is unchartered territory for all of us and we are trying to navigate it as best we can. If there was ever a time to be kind, neighborly and mindful of others - it's now.

All hands on deck.

While our seniors, immunocompromised and disabled are most in need regarding physical assistance - including help with housework, mowing lawns, spring cleanup, shopping and delivery of personal protective supplies (PPE) - everyone is in need when it comes to mental and emotional supports right now. Acts of kindness and showing compassion and concern in our conversations with others can go a long way in giving someone an extra boost to fend off feelings of loneliness, anxiety or isolation.

As we work to move through this pandemic, we must look out for each other and stick together as a community.

Thank you for being part of the solution.

Yours in service,

Diana ◊

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The Valley Patriot can be found in more than 800 locations in 48 communities in Massachusetts and NH.

The Valley Patriot is not responsible for, nor do we necessarily share the opinions of columnists and contributors that are published in the paper. Columns, by definition, are opinion pieces.

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Local daily news updates online at valleypatriot.com or facebook.com/valleypatriot

Thank you to Sean Patrick McCormack and his teammates Susan Grenier and Meredith Leigh at Lowell General Emergency Department.

FOOD: FROM PAGE 2

Need dessert? Jay Gees ice cream is delivering! The have a bunch of quarantine specials which you can order on jaygees.com.

Need beer? Local breweries are canning their beer and selling it during certain hours. Check with them before heading over, as times and the selection does change.

Spicket River Brewery in Lawrence (978-655-5784 spicketriverbrewery.net) sells beer from 5-8pm Wednesday-Saturday;

Oak and Iron in Andover (978-475-4077 oakandironbrewing.com) Thursday and Friday 3-5pm and Saturday 1-4pm.

Navigation Brewery in Lowell (navigationbrewing.com) is open from 4-7pm Thursday through Saturday.

Backyard Brewery in Derry, NH (603-623-3545 backyardbrewerynh.com) is open 7 days a week, Monday-Thursday 4-8pm and 12p-8p Friday-Sunday.

I did find a restaurant on Facebook called Your Place and Ours in Groveland (978-374-7409 yourplaceandourspizza.com).

What caught my eye was their french fry tray (pictured above). It is 8 different types of french fries with 6 different sauces. The 8 types of fries were from top left are blue buffalo, shaggy fries, chicken bacon ranch, and cheesy bacon, and on the right side from the top down are honey mustard, sweet chili, chicken parm, and fireside. It is $65 for the large tray, but the amount of food is worth it! My favorites were the sweet chili and blue buffalo.

I give Your Place and Ours four beards. I highly recommend this for a large group as our family of six had plenty left over at the end of the night.

Joel Faretra is The Valley Patriot's food columnist. He is also an elected member of the Methuen City Council. ◊

WEATHER 101 with AL KAPRIELIAN

Welcome to April and the first full month of the spring season. During April the sun angle will continue to get higher resulting in increasing daily high temperatures as we go through the month. We can get a spring snowstorm in April. It has happened in the past.

However, if it occurs it melts fast because the sun is higher in the sky and stronger. Recapping this past winter which includes the months of December, January and February the mean average temperature for these three months for Boston was 37.7 degrees which ranks number 2 (second warmest winter) since 1937. The warmest winter (number1) was 37.8 degrees which occurred in 2001 & 2002.

The mean average temperature for these three months for Worcester was 30.4 degrees which ranks number 7 (7th warmest winter) since 1937.

The warmest winter (number1) was 33.1 degrees which occured in 2001 and 2002. Once January began the northern jet stream kept the really cold Arctic air well north into Canada. This Arctic air never really moved south especially for any prolonged time.

In a normal winter we would see this Arctic air move south and stay with us for awhile. That did not happen this past winter. Snowfall ran below average for this past winter. However, temperatures ran above normal as I indicated above.

During January Boston had a high temperature of 74 degrees!!!

The warm temperatures continued for February as well. As a result of these warm temperatures some people were wearing shorts versus a heavy winter jacket which you would normally wear in January and February. This warm weather was caused by an upper level high pressure off the US east/southeast coast. This upper level high kept the northern jet stream to the north.

This placed our area on the warmer (south side) of this jet stream. As we moved into March there were some mild days, however, winter would not be over! We did see some chilly days and even snow. Snow occurred on March 23rd into the 24th.

The heaviest snow occurred away for the coast. In fact Cape Cod & the Islands just had rain. Some snowfall amounts were as follows Winchendon, MA got 7.5", Fitchburg, MA got 7.2", West Townsend, MA got 7.8", Pepperell, MA got 7.2", Lunenburg, MA got 6.4". In Franklin county MA Colrain got 8", the jackpot was East Hawley 9.8". In New Hampshire many inland areas saw 6"+ of snow. Bow, NH got 8.1", Danbury, NH got 7.1", Henniker, NH got 7". Some areas in NH got even more snow. Jefferson, NH got 11.2", Milford, NH got 12", the jackpot was in Greenville, NH 12.6".

With the time of year the higher elevations saw the greater snow amounts. Also with the time of year the snow was heavy and wet (contains more water) making it heavier and weighing more then the fluffy snow.

The weight of the snow can cause tree limbs and power lines to fall resulting in power outages. There were some power outages with the snow that fell on March 23 into the 24th. The heavy wet snow clings to trees bushes making for pretty scenes for taking pictures. This snow does not last long as the stronger March sun melts the snow rather quickly despite the high amounts that occured. Before March ended we did see another weather event.

This time it was not snow. It was strong thunderstorms and hail which occurred Sunday evening March 29. The coverage and hail from these thunderstorms were more extensive than the computer models were showing. Some areas that got hail were Worcester with .75 to 1" inch diameter hail. Leicester MA got up to 1" diameter hail. New Bedord, MA got .75 to 1" diameter hail. Woonsocket RI also got 1" diameter hail.

There were also some strong wind gusts with these thunderstorms. Finally, March 31st ended with sunshine. Even with the stronger March sun, temperatures were chilly along the coast due to the wind blowing in off the cold ocean.

Remember the ocean warms slower than the land in the spring months due to evaporation which is a cooling process.

Also the ocean constantly is moving which causes more energy from the sun to warm it compared to the land.

Stay tuned next month as we recapp April's weather. We will see if we get any storms and also if any snow occurs. In the meantime stay safe!!!

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

YUP WE ARE STILL HERE!

With all the shutdowns, lockdowns and closures of local businesses many were surprised to learn last week that The Valley Patriot was going to continue printing during the coronavirus pandemic. With most of our advertisers closed, this month we had to use all of our reserve funds to put out this edition of the paper. We felt it was important to continue educating the public and celebrating our front-line workers during this crisis and are happy to stretch our budget to do so. We are also happy to waive the advertising bill of any regular business advertising with us this month who is closed or has had to lay off. This is a thank you to our regular advertisers who have stayed with us and supported us for so many years.

But, moving forward we will depend on you to continue operating. 100% of our expenses here at the Valley Patriot comes from local advertisers. We urge other members of the business community to get in touch with us and help us promote your business through this crisis and after this is all over. Please call or email us if you or someone you know is interested in advertising with us and letting us help you promote your business or non-profit; you can call (978) 771-4091 or email valleypatriot@aol.com. Whether we continue to publish will depend upon the support of our business community. We are optimistic that we will be able to continue with your support.

THERE WILL BE A BASH

We had to postpone the Valley Patriot's 16th Anniversary BASH last month but the BASH will go on as soon as the coronavirus crisis is over. You can still contribute to our scholarship kids using PayPal, Venmo, Facebook Pay, or mailing a check to Valley Patriot BASH, PO BOX 453, North Andover, MA 01845.

NORTH ANDOVER ELECTIONS POSTPONED

The North Andover town elections were to be held on March 31st but the Board of Selectmen voted to postpone the election to June 2nd because of the coronavirus hysteria. Until that time, the two selectmen whose seats are up will continue in their capacity.

CARING FOR THE HOMELESS DURING CORONA

During the coronavirus hysteria those who care for the homeless in Lawrence have continued their efforts to service the most needy population in the valley.

TMF (The Movement Family) continues to venture out into Lawrence to hold their weekly, family dinner at 2 South Broadway in Lawrence. TMF members prepackage donated food, assemble them into dinners and then place them on a table where the homeless can pick them up. They are then instructed to eat the meal somewhere else to maintain social distancing.

HOUSE OF MERCY

Located on Baystate Road in Lawrence, House of Mercy continues to feed and clothe the homeless thanks to volunteers and organizers like Carrie Clark Weiland and Sharon Marie. During the crisis the dedicated volunteers at House of Mercy remain on site to help the homeless while maintaining social distancing.

COUNCILOR SABA COMPLAINS ABOUT POLICE DETAILS/OVERTIME DURING Coronavirus CRISIS

It's hard to believe that, at a time when the community is celebrating our first responders during this coronavirus hysteria, that anyone would be complaining about overtime and detail time being spent but here you have it. Methuen City Councilor Steve Saba whined and complained during last week's city council meeting that first responders were being paid overtime and detail time. Saba has been at war with the police since taking office three years ago. I was just hoping that during this crisis Saba would put aside his personal hatred for Chief Solomon and the Methuen cops and work towards helping our first responders get through the crisis with all the resources they need. Instead, Saba uses the coronavirus crisis to take cheap shots at the cops, making it look like they are stealing the public's money. Shame on him, and shame on the rest of the council for not calling him out.

CONTRACT AGREEMENT IN METHUEN

A little bird told me last week that the City of Methuen and the Methuen Police Superior Officer's Union have reached an agreement to their controversial 2018 contract. Sources tell The Valley Patriot that the agreement was reached weeks ago, but that Methuen City Council President Jim McCarty has refused to put the item on the city council agenda, citing the Coronavirus as his reason for the delay. Our sources say the agreement reached is "fair to both sides". Let's hope City Council Chairman Jim McCarty drags this out as long as he can because every day the city delays, they are paying the cops at the higher rate under the old contract. As for transparency I find it reprehensible that more than three weeks after an agreement has been reached, nobody from the City of Methuen has been "transparent" and notified the public that both sides have come to an agreement and everyone is simply waiting for the council to act. I expect more, the public expects more.

COUNCILORS MICRIMANAGING

Some members of the Methuen City Council are frantically trying to overturn the suspension of Methuen Police Officer Arthur Hardy. Councilor Simard, who openly admits he is "close personal friends" with Hardy, is leading that charge on the council's public safety subcommittee. Let's be clear. The city council has no say over the day to day operations of the city. They have no legal authority over personnel matters. I have no horse in this race. I don't think I have ever met Officer Hardy and have no opinion on his suspension by Mayor Jajuga. I do, however, care about good government. Elected officials need to know their role and their legal limitations. The mayor and only the mayor hires, fires and suspends city employees. City Councilors in Methuen need to understand that. If any of the councilors involved in this want to change the charter or run for mayor so they can make personnel decisions they are free to do that. But they should not be violating the charter by overstepping their authority because of personal friendships.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE OFFERS HELP TO LOCAL BUSINESS

The Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce has worked daily to assist our business community since the Coronavirus hysteria began. The Chamber issues a daily business assistance advisory incorporating business assistance loans from the SBA and state assistance programs. Other daily advisory includes workforce development matters. The Chamber has also begun a new, FREE webinar series on small business financing, unemployment assistance, and has begun a free virtual online networking series where businesses can promote their products or services.

The Chamber has worked to assist restaurants by promoting take out, gift cards and delivery services. The chamber supports restaurants by holding 100 events a year at a restaurant or function hall and are already working to schedule new events once the Governor lets business back. In addition, the Chamber staff is working from home answering countless emails every day to assist business with a variety of questions and concerns.

The Chamber has also surveyed its members and is using the information to assist businesses now, which enabled the chamber to be prepared for this extended stay at home order. The Chamber has participated in weekly conference calls with the Lt. Governor and Secretary Kennealy (economic development and Sec. Acosta/ labor).

They have also participated in conference calls with Congressmen Moulton and Trahan and Senators Warren and Senator Markey. The Chamber is putting those members in contact with the SBA and are assisting businesses in applying for the new business loans now available. Their daily advisories are also on the Governor's and other state and federal orders as they impact business and the unemployment benefits for employees.

CONTINUED UNDER FREDDIE

ROYAL HOUSE OF ROAST BEEF STILL OPEN FOR TAKE OUT!

Magdi Mikhael (back) with the crew at Royal House of Roast Beef, Pizza & Seafood on Lowell St. in Methuen want to remind all our Valley Patriot readers that they are still open for takeout to satisfy those cravings!!

Royal House of Roast Beef has been a favorite among our secret Valley Patriot taste testers at the Annual Taste of Methuen giving them best dish six years in a row! See their menu online at royalhouseroastbeef.com or call in your order at (978) 794-4996

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CONGRESSMAN MOULTON ADVOCATES FOR NON-PROFITS

Rep. Seth Moulton wrote to Rep. Richard Neal, the Chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means with a request for Congress to use the next round of coronavirus stimulus funding to provide the same help to nonprofits that Congress is providing to businesses.

"Nonprofits are facing the same challenges as businesses. They deserve the same relief," Moulton said. "In addition to lost revenue that's caused layoffs and pay cuts, nonprofits are providing food and shelter for the vulnerable and other essential services. All of this is happening while the donations they count on have dried up because people are worried about their finances and the economy's ability to recover quickly from the pandemic. Congress must step up."

The day the House passed the CARES Act, the most recent disaster relief package, Moulton partnered with Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) to introduce the Save Organizations that Serve (SOS) America Act to urge Congressional action in future negotiations, which are now underway.

REP. MORAN SECURES $10M FOR DISTRICT IN TRANSPORTATION BOND BILL

State Representative Frank A. Moran (D-Lawrence, Andover and Methuen) has authored amendments in this year's budget included totaling $10 million for the 17th Essex District. The transportation bond bill passed the House by a vote of 150-1.

"The transportation bond bill is an opportunity for the Commonwealth to address the ongoing issues of growing traffic congestion and a lack of adequate funding for our public transit systems," said Representative Moran.

"This funding also provides the Legislature the ability to fund much needed, long-term investments to a number of projects throughout Massachusetts."

Representative Moran filed an amendment to secure $3 million for the construction and expansion of a rail trail in the City of Lawrence and an additional $7 million for the construction of a highway noise barrier at the confluence of Interstates I-93 and I-495 in the Town of Andover.

CHILDRENS TRUST PROVIDING FREE PARENTING RESOURCES

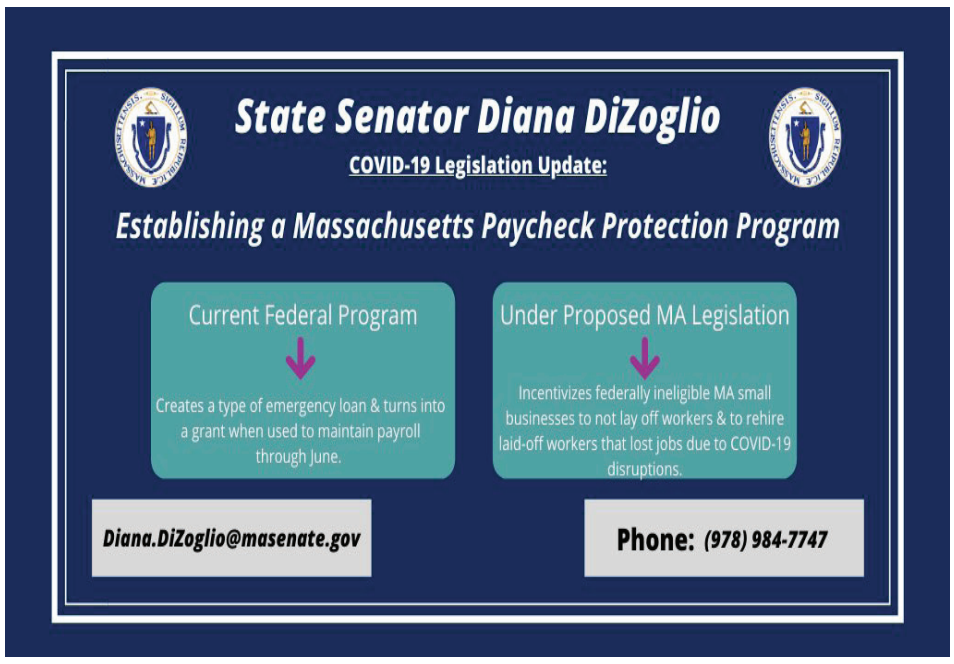
The Children's Trust of Massachusetts announced that it is offering its digital, evidence-based parenting resource, All Babies Cry, for free in response to growing concerns about the increased risk of child abuse and neglect as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

"We know that isolation and stress are correlated with child abuse and neglect so we are doing everything we can to support parents during this difficult time," said Suzin Bartley, Executive Director of the Children's Trust, an organization dedicated to ending child abuse and neglect in Massachusetts.

The National Child Abuse Hotline just reported that March calls to the hotline increased by 20% and text messages to the hotline increased by 400% compared to the same period in 2019. The organization also shared anecdotal information on calls coming in from new parents struggling to manage stress levels as they deal with the current pandemic and associated stressors, social isolation, and infant crying. In response, the Children's Trust made the move to give all parents free, full access to helpful videos with practical advice from experts, parents, and grandparents at www.allbabiescry.org with the access code "COVID19". Topics include: what's normal about crying, comforting your baby, self-care tips for parents, and how to cope with colic. A full list of online playgroups, parenting support groups, and other resources can be found at www.onetoughjob.org. ◊

SALVATORES RESTAURANT PAYING IT FORWARD

Michael Agricola and Phillip Wood, owners of Salvatore's Restaurant in Lawrence may be closed for dine-in business because of the coronavirus, but last month they showed up at the Daybreak Homeless Shelter in Lawrence to serve a full dinner to the homeless. Salvatores is still open for take-out business and we encourage you to call for a delivery or take-out to thank them for their generosity. TAKE OUT and DELIVERY options are available. Call their friendly staff at 978-291-0220 ext 1.


State Senator Diana DiZoglio
COVID-19 Legislation Update:
Establishing a Massachusetts Paycheck Protection Program
Current Federal Program
Creates a type of emergency loan & turns into a grant when used to maintain payroll through June.
Under Proposed MA Legislation
Incentivizes federally ineligible MA small businesses to not lay off workers & to rehire laid-off workers that lost jobs due to COVID-19 disruptions.
Diana.DiZoglio@masenate.gov
Phone: (978) 984-7747

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Sincerely,

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SBA's Paycheck Protection Program for Small Businesses Affected by Coronavirus Pandemic

One of Many Economic Relief Provisions to Protect Workers and Small Businesses

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration Administrator Jovita Carranza today launched the Paycheck Protection Program, a $349 billion emergency loan program created last week with the President's signing of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES). The program provides forgivable loans up to $10 million to small businesses left financially distressed by the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The loans, which will be administered at the local level by a national network of banks and credit unions, are designed to maintain the viability of millions of small businesses struggling to meet payroll and day-to-day operating expenses.

"These loans will bring immediate economic relief and eight weeks of financial certainty to millions of small businesses and their employees," SBA Administrator Carranza said. "We urge every struggling small business to take advantage of this unprecedented federal resource – their viability is critically important to their employees, their community, and the country."

The loans, which are 100% backed by SBA, are being provided to small businesses without collateral requirements, personal guarantees, SBA fees, or credit elsewhere tests. Those eligible for the program include small businesses, certain non-profits, veterans' organizations, self-employed individuals, independent contractors, and other businesses meeting size standards based on their North American Industry Classification System code.

The Paycheck Protection Program's maximum loan amount is $10 million with a fixed 1% interest rate and maturity of two years.

The loans are available to cover up to eight weeks of average monthly payroll (based on 2019 figures) plus 25% and payments are deferred for six months (interest does accrue). The SBA will forgive the portion of loan proceeds used for payroll costs and other designated operating expenses for up to eight weeks, provided at least 75% of loan proceeds are used for payroll costs. Eligible expenses for the eight-week forgiveness include:

* Payroll costs (excluding the prorated portion of any compensation above $100,000 per year for any person. Payroll costs include salary, commissions, tips; certain employee benefits including sick leave and health care premiums, and state and local taxes;
* Mortgage interest (not prepayment or principal payments) and rent payments on mortgages and leases in existence after February 15, 2020;
* Utilities such as electricity, gas, water, transportation, phone and internet access for services that began before February 15, 2020; and
* Additional wages paid to tipped employees.

Visit www.SBA.gov/Coronavirus for additional resources about protecting your business, employees and customers. ◊

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Clear Path New England Offers Services for Homeless Veterans

Clear Path for Veterans New England is taking all necessary health and wellness precautions advised to address the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, we recognize the growing needs among local Military, Veterans and their families. Like so many American families, there are growing issues of job security, financial stability, and housing and food insecurity. Despite the challenges in the environment we are working hard to remain ahead of the curve in providing Support Services to the large population of Veterans living and working in our communities.

Our first major initiative is the stand up and operation of two pop up empowerment centers to serve our clients. In partnership with the Massachusetts Military Support Foundation, we will be operating two centers, the first at our home base in Devens, MA and the second in Methuen, MA. The rapid set up of these Centers have been made possible through the efforts of community leaders like Jessica Strunkin, Vice President, Devens and Methuen's Mayor Neil Perry.

We are working to expand our area of coverage in locations in NH and Maine.

Beginning Monday, March 30th we will be providing Food 4 Vets packages which include nonperishable ingredients for 28 meals, enough for 14 days. Thanks to Don Cox of Massachusetts Military Support Foundation and his uncanny logistics ability we will be among several pop-up empowerment centers ready to serve our families across New England. The distribution will be largely drive up and will closely follow COVID-19 guidance.

We are still "open for business" and continuing to reach out to our community using telecommunication approaches such as webinars and virtual meetings. Our canine service dogs are in training with their trainers in order to stay on track with their eventual placement with a Veteran. We are providing peer coaching assistance on a variety of topics telephonically.

The best place to connect with us is through social media and at, facebook.com/clearpathne to keep updated on our progress. For any additional inquiries, please contact us at info@clearpathne.org ◊

Your Health with Rick Bellanti

Minimizing Stress During These Difficult Times

Rick Bellanti
HEALTH & WELLNESS COLUMNIST

Being on a diet or weight loss program seems stressful at times for some people, but it might be just what you need to help with the anxiety and stress of this virus pandemic hitting us right now andfrom worrying about the kid's home schooling, possibly being unemployed, protecting our elderly, to maybe contracting the Virus ourselves. Right now they are saying that staying in place with minimal contact with others is the best place to start to fight this from getting worse.

For some people that might be a good thing, some are people are just loners and prefer to do things on their own anyway, others need to be around people to get through their days. No doubt things have changed and we have to change with it to survive this new way of life that we are living right now. Businesses have closed, including gyms which will be tough on some people that need the gym as part of their daily routine. (Don't be too concerned as these businesses will again reopen and be ready for you).

One thing is for certain, stress will show up in one form or another and that could very well be a hindrance on a healthy lifestyle program . People may turn back to alcohol, smoking or unhealthy food choices. Making poor food choices seems to be one topic that I hit upon here and the easiest to fall into without even seeing it before it's too late. A harmful cycle of bad food choices, like grabbing drinks with unhealthy amounts of sugar and caffeine to get us through the day, leads to bad habits and those bad habits will eventually lead to a bad cycle that will run out of control and with some not so good consequences, like gaining weight, being tired all the time and stressing us out even more.

The caffeine you crave to keep yourself going is harming you more than doing you good. Too much caffeine in your diet leads to poor concentration, drops in your productivity level and you may also experience sleeplessness and your levels of cortisol will rise. When a person has a lot of stress and anxiety they will have an increase of the stress hormone cortisol, which will make you crave the not so good food choices like foods high in fat, sugar and salt. It does become a cycle that we must learn to break to live a healthy lifestyle.

Exercising regularly is very effective in reducing stress, improving alertness and better concentration. Exercise may improve overall mental health by helping your brain cope with stress. So it's much better to do a thirty minute workout before studying for that test or a work deadline than it is by grabbing a double mocha latte with extra sugar and loads of depressing caffeine. Right now, with gyms closed, it's best to distance yourself from others, but you can take a walk or a jog, even walk the dog. Doing something physical for thirty minutes a day will do wonders for your mind.

Sleep is still very important and during stressful times it might be harder to fall asleep. Your mind might be over thinking the happenings with the negative news making things worse. Try to avoid stressful triggers, like argumentative people on social media. In fact, you should turn off all your screens and devices at least sixty minutes prior to going to bed and just relax.

Remember to keep your distance from others. Reach out to elderly neighbors (by phone) see if they need anything. Check in with family members as much as possible, through phone, text or social media. Stay at home as much as possible, be straight with your kids and not try to hide what's going on, keep them active with puzzles and boardgames and try to keep them calm and focused. This is only temporary, it's important to take care of yourself. Wash your hands throughout the day using antibacterial soap, wear a face mask in public places to protect yourself and others. Only go out if you need food or medicine (keep your time outside minimal). If you can and have the help, leave everyone else at home and go by yourself; the less exposure everyone has, the better we all will be.

Please don't forget to thank the essential workers, still working all day to protect us and be there for sick patients - doctors, nurses, hospital employees, police, fire and military - supermarkets and restaurants that are still preparing food to be delivered or picked up. We are one nation fighting the same battle, we all must do our part by staying home and getting through this.

Rick Bellanti is a wellness columnist and is on a journey himself to lose 240lbs, and has lost 160lbs since the start of 2015. If you have any questions or comments, please post them to his Getting Healthy with Rick Bellanti Facebook page and once a month he will address a few of the topics here. ◊

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Mike and LeeAnne Condon of the Sweetheart Inn in Methuen provides homemade dinners for their customers: Chicken Pies, French Meat Pies and Italian Meat Pies. Wtih 2 hours notice Mike and LeeAnne can provide a freshly prepared dinner for you and your entire family. Call (978) 682-7012.

Victoria Marcoux of Methuen donated handmade face masks to the Methuen Police Department

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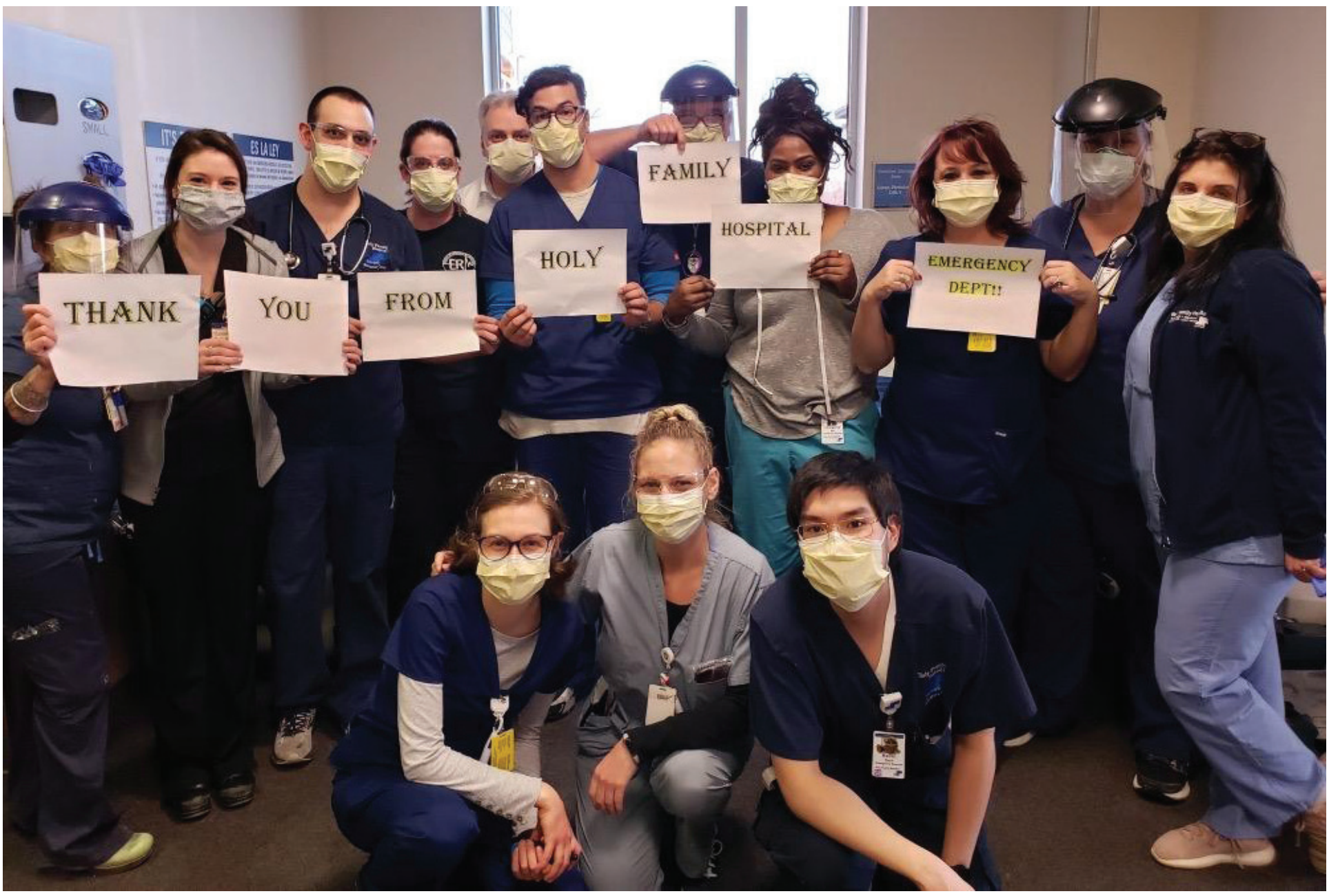

The Emergency Room Staff at Holy Family Hospital posted this photo to thank all of the good Samaritans who donated food to the hospital. The staff said they want to thank the entire community for being so generous in this crisis.

Baker Issues Order to Ensure Waste and Recycling Collection

BOSTON – The Baker-Polito Administration today announced the issuance of an emergency order to ensure that intrastate waste and recycling collection and disposal will continue uninterrupted during the COVID-19 emergency. Due to the essential nature of these services and anticipated impacts due to the COVID-19 outbreak, the Administration's order provides relief from state and federal requirements that govern the hours of service allowed for commercial vehicle operators involved in waste and recycling transportation and collection, while maintaining important safety protections and measures.

"As Massachusetts continues its comprehensive response to the COVID-19 outbreak, it is imperative that residents across the Commonwealth be able to rely on key services such as waste and recycling collection and disposal," said Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Martin Suuberg. "By issuing this emergency order, we can better protect public health by ensuring that residents are able to maintain proper hygiene, cleanliness, and social distancing in their homes while navigating these new and challenging circumstances."

The Administration's action will help support continuity of waste and recycling operations by helping to ensure availability of adequate staffing resources throughout this emergency, and is consistent with the State of Emergency declared by Governor Charlie Baker on Tuesday, March 10, 2020.

The order will remain in effect until April 12, 2020 unless the Administration determines otherwise. ◊

GLCAC Announces Program Changes

The Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. is making several operational changes in an effort to keep our clients, staff, their families and the community safe in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

GLCAC staff has stopped serving clients in person. Clients are encouraged to contact programs by phone or email. All classes and gatherings are canceled, including preschool and adult education.

GLCAC employees are working remotely from their homes to serve clients. Only a small number of employees are onsite.

"We will continue to provide services primarily over the phone and by email, however the health and wellbeing of the community and our staff is of upmost importance,'' said Evelyn Friedman, GLCAC's executive director. "We appreciate your patience and support during this unprecedented and challenging time.''

Please check back daily for updates at www.glcac.org and on GLCAC's social media pages.

PROGRAMS OPEN BY PHONE OR EMAIL ONLY (paperwork can be dropped off at 305 Essex St.):

* Consumer Protection: 978-620-4990 or Rebecca Lange rlange@glcac.org
* HEARTWAP/Weatherization: 681-495-5556 or Luz Ramos eramos@glcac.org
* Housing services: 978-620-4987 or Luz DE LA Cruz ldelacruz@glcac.org
* LIHEAP (fuel assistance): 978-681-4950 or Gerald Walsh gwalsh@glcac.org or Ada Figueroa afigueroa@glcac.orgW.I.C. (Methuen and North. Andover offices closed): 978-681-4960 or Natasha Ramirez-Estrella nramirez-estrella@glcac.org
* Immigration services: 978-620-4988 or Queyron Nolberto qnolberto@glcac.org
* Health Connector Navigator Program: 978-620-4784 or Kesia Moreta kmoreta@glcac.org
* Community and Family Support Center: 978-770-7173 or Annmary Connor aconnor@glcac.org
* Workforce development: 978-620-4736 or Lisa Crothers lcrothers@glcac.org

PROGRAMS CANCELLED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE:

* VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)(this is being evaluated)
* Financial literacy course
* ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
* R.A.F.T. (Residential Assistance for Families in Transition) orientations waived but accepting drop-off applications and phone and email inquiries.
* Weatherization home audits and contractor work
* Head Start (including home visits)
* Lead poisoning prevention
* Child care
* Food pantry ◊

Austin Prep Opens 4th Quarter Remote Teaching and Learning Opportunities to New Students

READING – As students and families struggle with K-12 continuity of instruction across the United States, Austin Preparatory School welcomed 18 new students Monday to their school community through an expansion of their already established remote teaching and learning program. The program was launched in mid-March as a result of the statewide closure of schools in response to the COVID-19 crisis, and has been well-received by parents, students, and faculty.

The new students, who represent the towns of Andover, Reading, North Andover, Stoneham, Groveland, North Reading, Saugus and Rowley, started classes on the first day of the 4th academic quarter and will have the opportunity to finish the academic year on campus should schools reopen to conclude the year.

In the remote teaching and learning program, students follow a daily modified schedule of Austin Prep's Advisory Program and rotating academic block schedule that approximates the full Austin Prep experience. The new students have been working with faculty advisors to transition to their new school, a new and different way of learning, and to familiarize them with all the resources available at Austin Prep. This transition included an orientation meeting on Sunday, conducted through the Zoom Cloud Meetings application used by faculty and students to create virtual classrooms on their laptops and iPads.

Prior to the statewide order, staff from the Austin Prep Department of Technology set up over 70 brand new Apple MacBook Air computers, configured with all the tools needed to teach remotely in case of a school-wide shut down, and the Austin Prep Office of Academic Affairs guided faculty through web tutorials so they were proficient in using the videoconferencing app Zoom Cloud Meetings.

"The middle school team has helped make this transition go smoothly for our son," parent Susan Ellis said. "We are impressed with their collaborative effort to acclimate students and put in a remote learning plan so quickly."

Students' courses include Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies, Theology, and Language. The modular nature of some of the Middle School courses have allowed these new students to jump right in to the next topic or unit and participate actively in class. Sixth and seventh grade students are enrolled in a new course designed especially for this program "Topics in Art History: The Roman World." The course explores elements of the classical civilization's lasting legacy like Roman architecture, mythology, and the fundamentals of Latin.

"Our new students are settling in wonderfully. They are all smiles and eager to get going," English Faculty Leeann Blais said. "One of our new students is already exploring student club opportunities and we aren't even back in the building yet."

New students echoed that sentiment.

"My first few days at Austin Prep were fantastic. All of the teachers and students were especially kind to me and it was very easy to catch on with my classes. I just came in class and felt like I belonged," freshman Vasu Jetly said. "It was very interesting and exciting to attend classes in a new way (virtually)."

"The first few days of the Austin Prep remote learning program have been great. Going to class on Zoom has been a really fun way to be a new student. I feel like I am part of the community already but from my dining room," 6th grader Sydney Rech said. "My teachers have also been helpful during class and after class to check in to make sure everything makes sense. My advisor, Mr. (Jonathan) Pollard has been checking in to make sure that I have everything I need. I feel like I am learning a lot already. I can already speak some Latin words thanks to Mr. (Michael) McLaughlin."

Located in Reading, Austin Preparatory School is an independent, Augustinian Catholic school serving young men & women in grades 6-12. For more information about enrolling in the remote teaching and learning program or general questions about Austin Prep, please contact the Austin Prep Office of Admissions at (781) 944-4900 x839. ◊

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Methuen Police Arrest Home Invasion Suspect with Firearm

Methuen Police were called to the area of Haverhill St. and Burnham Road late Tuesday afternoon after a man called 911 claiming that someone was trying to get into his home with a gun.

When police arrived they did not find the suspect or victim, and said they believed the call was a hoax but out of an abundance of caution searched the neighborhood with long guns drawn.

Eventually police found the suspect had chased the victim through the neighborhood.

Police arrested the suspect, 39 year old Amaury Amonte of Lynn who was in possession of a handgun. Police were also able to locate the victim.

Amaury Almonte was charged with assault with a dangerous weapon, carrying a firearm without a license, possession of ammunition without and FID card. Almonte was also wanted by Haverhill police for carrying a firearm without a license, ammunition with an FID card, receiving stolen property over $1,200 and possession of a class B substance.

The suspect was booked at the Methuen Police Station at this time. ◊

Don't Forget Our EMS Workers!

Armstrong Ambulance and the Massachusetts Ambulance Association is joining other private ambulance providers in the #DontForgetEMS campaign in an effort to gain access to personal protective equipment set aside by Amazon for healthcare providers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Amazon created a section of their website where hospitals are able to purchase personal protective equipment for their employees. However, private ambulance providers, who work directly with hospitals to treat patients, are unable to purchase the same equipment through the website at this time.

Supplies of personal protective equipment, such as masks, protective gowns and latex gloves, have become increasingly difficult for healthcare providers and first responders to obtain over the last few weeks as the virus has continued to spread.

First responders use the equipment to protect themselves from exposure to the virus as they respond to calls involving people who may be reporting symptoms in line with COVID-19 or may have been in contact with a positive COVID-19 case. As the virus continues to spread, the aim is to keep personnel healthy and allow them to continue to serve the community.

"All of us in the emergency medical field are working together to help those in need and keep our communities safe," CEO Rich Raymond said.

"Allowing private EMS systems like ours to access this equipment is a vital step to ensure and achieve that safety as we continue to respond regularly to emergency calls during the COVID-19 pandemic."

The #DontForgetEMS campaign is spearheaded by the American Ambulance Association, which represents and advocates for private ambulance providers across the nation. ◊

MICHEL PUBLIC RELATIONS

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Tomas G. Michele
LAWRENCE COLUMNIST

Lawrence, MA — A PR start-up operating for less than 2 years, is pushing to become a rising star within the local business community of the Merrimack Valley. Thanks to Northern Essex Community College's President, Lane Glenn, Michel PR, LLC is now partnering up with the post-secondary education institution, to provide support with Spanish communications outreach and internship opportunities for marketing students.

With a cloud-based business model, this public relations firm assists non-profit organizations and small businesses in communications, branding and marketing solutions, from an integrated-brand-management approach serving as a connector between the Hispanic and the American market. Ultimately, assisting enterprises with elevating their brand and gaining competitive differentiation.

Michel PR has 6 team members, three of which operate from San Juan, PR and the other three who work from Lawrence, MA. In a field that has had an annual growth of 2.1% for the past 5 years, generating 14.9bn in revenue with an estimate of 44,516 of registered businesses in the United States.

With the new and uncertain conditions that have affected the U.S. economy, as a result of the COVID-19 public health crisis, companies from different industries have seen their sustainability promise tarnished. According to FEMA statistics, roughly 40 to 60 percent of small businesses close doors after a catastrophe. Hence, the establishments unwilling to adapt to the new environment that the coronavirus is imposing, such as demanding close communications with stakeholders, utilizing social media to inform regularly, incorporating digital tools to their operations and being transparent, no longer have feasible opportunities to survive the shelter-in-place collaterals.

Michel PR aims to create a culture of partnerships and cooperation between clients and their constituents. Helping enterprises to develop products such as infographics, oratory presentations design, websites, newsletters and even branding guidelines. Furthermore, assisting with strategic planning such as market positioning and microtargeting.

The public relations start-up is a venture that prides itself on diversity, equity and inclusion. With a culture that aligns with efforts to impact communities that have been traditionally underserved. Values inherited from EParaTodos, the nonprofit organization that assisted with the founding and funding that made possible for Tomas Michel, its proprietor, to incorporate the business with the State of Massachusetts. "Without the help of Janin Duran, EParaTodos' Executive Director and Andres Silva, EParaTodos' Program Manager, I would have not been able to develop my business with a strong foundation as I have it now. They understand the disadvantages people like me suffer from, in order to create sustainable platforms, given lack of financial and social capital, language barriers and system barriers."

The Michel PR team believes that everybody has a story to tell and value to bring to their community, regardless of their socio-economic or ethnic background. Through a robust offering of PR services, the team is working to bring innovation towards Greater Lawrence and now San Juan, in a time where businesses need to gain resilience. Assisting them to surpass thresholds associated with lack of tools, resources, and knowledge from the communications stance.

As of now, we are very focused in providing crisis communications support for struggling businesses. Since Governor Charlie Baker declared communications as an essential field of operation during the COVID-19 epidemic, we want to ensure that we assist as many businesses as we can. Whether by outsourcing one of our team members or taking over clients' marketing communications. At the end, businesses are a building block of our society. They provide employment for families, drive wealth throughout the communities where they operate and beautify our downtowns.

Michel PR is accredited with the Better Business Bureau, registered with the Public Relations Society of America, and currently holds a seat at the BNI Haverhill's Chapter.

*For more info about Michel PR: https://michelpr.com*info@michelpr.com*

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The health care workers at AFC Urgent Care on Merrimack St. Methuen suited up to test patients for the Coronavirus. Above (left to right) Nurse Practitioners, Brook Butterfield, Sarah Saurman, Raquel DeJesus and Tracy Schuler. Photo above right: AFC workers prepare tests at their Methuen location. AFC Urgent Care has been testing residents of the Merrimack Valley and waiving the co-pay and/or the fees if someone comes in uninsured. To get tested you MUST call in advance (781) 430-8161. Thank you to Lisa Williams and Tom Delacey of AFC for servicing our community in a time of need and doing so out of pocket. You are true community heroes.

METHUENCARES
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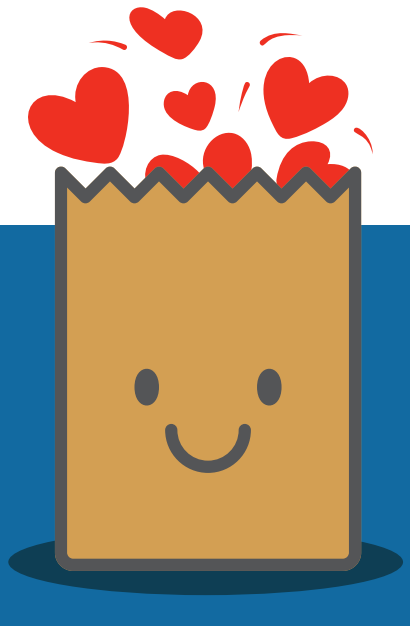
Neighbors helping neighbors in Methuen!



Your donations of paper goods or shelf-stable items (pasta, rice, potatoes, beans) are appreciated. Thank you.

If you'd like to donate or have questions, please call 978-609-1866.

A Financial Plan to Help Landlords and Tenants

An Open Letter to our Elected Leaders

George Scione
VALLEY PATRIOT CONTRIBUTOR

I have a financial plan that can help landlords, tenants - heck, anyone with a loan through any bank or lending agency (including for cars, payday loans, etc).

Businesses worldwide are being shut down. The banking, lending and loan sharking industry should be as well.

Congress should enact a two, three- or fourth-month forbearance on all loans/mortgages (minimum two month, but basically for as long as quarantining is a federal directive).

These two/three months aren't forgiven, they are simply moved to the end of the original payment plan. The only thing forgiven is the added interest those extra months would add at the end of the loans/mortgages, so payments won't increase.

For example, payments for April, May and possibly June of 2020 are added to the end of the payment plan in place, whether that ends later this year or in 2024.

With this also comes protection for tenants against eviction from rental properties, as the landlords must do the same with rent payments as is being done with their mortgages. Yes, this automatically adds three months onto a rental lease, but everyone gets their money in the end - the landlords, the banks, even the loan shark predatory lenders.

We don't need to make this so complicated. It's a pretty simple solution to what is a growing financial problem we are all facing.

It would be an amazing bipartisan effort to help all citizens of our country get through this crisis without stressing over eviction, repossession or financial ruin. The conservatives couldn't say "We're just trying to forgive payments owed. You signed the contract. Lift yourself up by your bootstraps and pay your bills, slackers!" The liberals couldn't say "Big banks and lenders are going to foreclose or financially ruin hard working Americans because they're all greedy 1 percenters just trying to profit off this situation."

I'm calling on all my friends in local, state and federal government to seriously look into this idea for our nation right now. There's no time to waste.

If you're a local or state official with connections to those on the federal side (I know I have many), please talk to them. There's no need to fight over who needs more assistance.

In this case, it's straight across the board help for every American for the next two to three months. ◊

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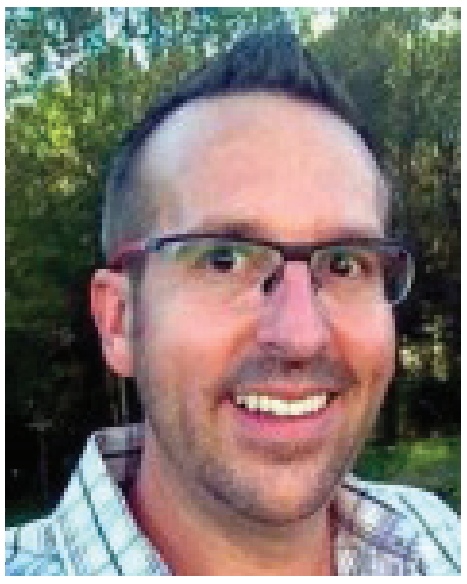
Things Keep Looking up for the MassGOP

Brian Genest
DRACUT COLUMNIST



It's been a heck of a good year for the MassGOP and Chairman Jim Lyons. Our Republican Party has a Republican leader at the helm – a conservative who makes the now out-of-power establishment even weaker-kneed than usual. To make matters even better, Lyons has such strong support on the state committee that even his detractors have been stunningly silent these days.

From the night Lyons won the chairmanship last year with a majority vote of the state committee, he's had the party establishment gasping for breath and grasping for words. Brent Anderson, the longtime party treasurer who challenged Lyons for the top job, was the first one to put his own foot in his big mouth. Anderson told the media beforehand that he had lined up enough votes to win, but that was fuzzy math. Lyons got 47 of the 80 votes, the establishment got defeated and overly-confident Anderson got publicly humiliated. After the loss, Anderson was missing from state committee meetings last year and he didn't run for re-election this year.

Speaking of making an exit, no one made a faster one than Lyon's predecessor, Kirsten Hughes.

With Anderson's loss, Hughes and the guys from Gov. Charlie Baker's campaign, who were running the MassGOP for years, lost control of the party, not to mention the cash being raised by the MassGOP and its affiliate, Mass Victory. On their way out the door, the defeated establishment took control of the MassGOP's fundraising database. Lyons had to have party lawyers get involved to regain rightful access and shut out the Baker campaign's bandits.

In the two years before her departure, Hughes and the MassGOP spent big money from party donors on a variety of questionable expenditures. Very questionable. Hughes oversaw a ton of cash flying out the door: There was more than $100,000 spent at fancy restaurants, including more than $30,000 at top steak houses, $164,000 in parking fees and $18,000 in Uber rides, among other things. At the same time, while the establishment lived it up, down-ticket Republican candidates mostly went without!

When Lyons shined a spotlight on the past spending practices, Hughes clammed up in true-hack fashion and refused to be interviewed by party lawyers or cooperate with an administrative review and financial audit of the MassGOP. Hughes wouldn't participate in the investigation of the possible fraudulent and illegal use of MassGOP assets or the review of financial controls and transactions conducted by the party's forensic accounting firm. In other words, Hughes was the perfect candidate for the $137,000 "job" she subsequently landed as a "special sheriff" in Norfolk County.

But Lyons came out a big winner as a result of the state committee races that were held on the Presidential Primary ballot in March. Despite public promises to fight for control of the 80-seat committee, Baker's camp only managed to challenge about half the seats. And despite spending big money on political mailers and advertising funded by a Baker-backed PAC, the establishment lost ground and Lyons picked up about 10 more supporters on the state committee.

One of those supporters is Kathy Lynch, the new state committeewoman for the First Middlesex district of Lowell, Westford, Tyngsborough, Groton, Pepperrell and Groton. Lynch, chairman of the Westford Republican Town Committee, crushed establishment candidate Mary Burns of Lowell, a political dinosaur and Baker-appointed UMass Trustee who criticized Lyons and loves to post Facebook selfies with Bill Weld, Marty Meehan and Lori Trahan.

During the conference call meeting of the state committee this month, Lynch was part of the unanimous vote to affirm Lyons as chairman. Not one of his detractors objected, which would have resulted in a roll-call vote. Not one even cleared their throat, although I'm certain I heard a few eye rolls. Regardless, the way to be seen is to stand up, the way to be heard is to speak up and the way to be appreciated is to shut up, so let's call it another win for Lyons, the MassGOP and our down-ticket candidates.

— Brian Genest is chairman of the Dracut Republican Town Committee and a member of the Massachusetts Republican State Committee representing the Second Essex & Middlesex district of Andover, Dracut, Lawrence and Tewksbury. ◊

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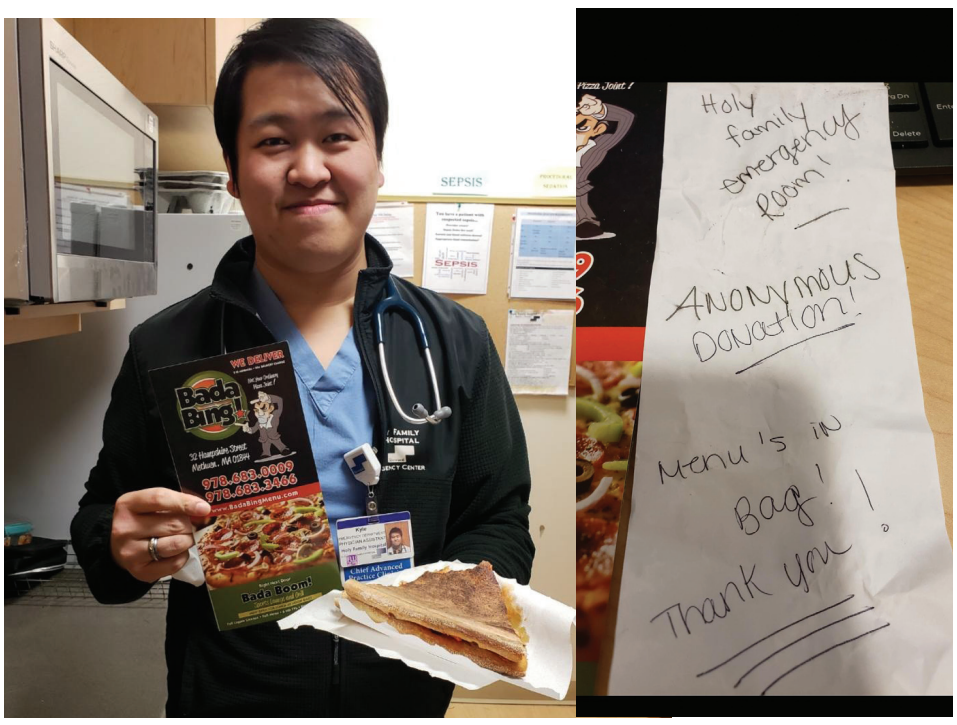

Kyle Chiang Physician Assistant at Holy Family Hospital thanks the anonymous donor who purchased dinner from BadaBings in Methuen and sent it to the medical staff on the front lines of the fight against the Coronavirus.

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The Valley Patriot

Donations Needed at Lawrence General Including Supplies and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

We are grateful to those asking how they can help Lawrence General Hospital and our front-line health care team as we respond to the coronavirus pandemic. Many health care providers, including Lawrence General Hospital, are facing a potential shortage of medical supplies including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). As Lawrence General Hospital continues increasing community testing and care capabilities in response to COVID-19, the hospital is actively searching out, purchasing and accepting donations of additional supplies including PPE.

View details: https://www.lawrencegeneral.org/about-us/covid-19-donations.aspx

HOW CAN PEOPLE HELP DURING THIS EXTRAORDINARY TIME?

DONATION OF GOODS: Our most pressing needs (and who may be able to help most) are:

- N95 MASKS: NIOSH approved on the box is a top priority, we will accept all masks which are new and in packaging. (dentists, veterinarians, tattoo parlors, construction and industrial companies, nail and beauty salons)
- GLOVES: Surgical type, non-sterile exam gloves, no winter/seasonal gloves please (dentists and veterinarians)
- Gowns for clinicians
- Tyvek suits and 'bunny suits': (construction and industrial companies)
- Sewn masks: Example of pattern may be found at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VgHrnS6n4iA
- Plastic face shields: (painters and construction companies)
- Safety glasses and safety goggles
- Purple top disinfectant wipes (not for use on skin): (dentists and veterinarians)
- Wipes with bleach
- Hand sanitizer

(MORE)

DROP OFF INFORMATION:

Please bring donated items to our neighbors at the North Andover Fire Department, 795 Chickering Road, North Andover MA; they will ensure safe delivery to the hospital. We want to thank you, please print our COVID 19 DONATION FORM and bring with your donated items. View and print form at:

https://www.lawrencegeneral.org/uploads/COVID-9%20Donation%20Form_Lawrence%20General.pdf

MAKE A GIFT:

Many generous friends of Lawrence General have asked how they can support the hospital through this crisis. You can have an impact by making a gift to the Annual Fund. Please consider donating so we may continue to be a vital community resource:

https://www.lawrencegeneral.org/support-lgh/give-now.aspx

ITEMS TO KEEP AT HOME:

Currently, we are unable to accept gifts of food, baked goods and perishable items, blankets, clothes, toys, and books/magazines. If you would like to support or clinicians and staff, we would suggest gift cards for locations such as supermarkets and pharmacies.

Updated needs will continue to be posted on our website at:

https://www.lawrencegeneral.org/about-us/covid-19-donations.aspx

Lawrence General Hospital is a regional, independent, nonprofit hospital. With more than 272,000 patient visits annually, Lawrence General ensures access to high-quality care, the latest technologies, and more than 500 local providers, including primary care and many specialties. A designated Level III Trauma Center, Lawrence General has one of the busiest Emergency Departments in Massachusetts, offers a broad range of specialty surgeries in its new Santagati Center for surgery, and leads the region in cardiac care with Massachusetts' most highly accredited cardiovascular center. It has clinical affiliations with Floating Hospital for Children at Tufts Medical Center, and Beth Israel Lahey Health. It offers services from its main campus in Lawrence, as well as from locations in Andover, North Andover, Methuen, MA and Salem, NH. For more information, visit www.lawrencegeneral.org. ◊

Local Businesses Donate to MethuenCares!

The Methuen Police Department and Methuen Mayor Neil Perry would like to thank Mommy's Pho Vietnamese Noodles and Bar, Dean Silva Plumbing and Heating, and Beautacious Nails - three terrific Methuen businesses that generously donated much needed gloves and N95 masks for our first responders Thanks also to Julie Brady of The Savings Bank (pictured below in the first photo) for dropping off these needed items. The Methuen Cares Center, located at the former site of Avenue at the Loop, will be open to receive donations today and tomorrow 10am-6pm. Requests are being received and filled daily. ◊

IBEW Local 103 donated N95 masks to the Lawrence Fire Department. Thank you so much Lawrence firefighters and thank you to the IBEW Local 103

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Lawrence General Staff Says THANK YOU! to the Community for the Outpouring of Support

THANK YOU TO SAL LUPOLI (bottom left photo) who donated 200 pizzas to the staff at Lawrence General to thank them for their personal sacrifices during the Coronavirus crisis.

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Haverhill School Committee Ratifies Pact with Educators on Remote Learning

FROM: WHAV.NET

Update: Educators approved the agreement during Friday voting.

The Haverhill School Committee changed its mind last night and approved an agreement with educators that governs next week's rollout of remote learning.

Committee members voted unanimously to approve the understanding that was hammered out earlier this week between the Haverhill Education Association and school negotiators. The breakthrough came after three members withdrew objections to paying a full-year of activity stipends for a reduced school year. Unable to approve the original pact, the full committee instead voted Wednesday to send back an amendment. Union President Anthony J. Parolisi told members he is "both excited and relieved" at the turn of events.

The accord requires all union members to work remotely, but with greater flexibility than originally proposed by Superintendent Margaret Marotta; continue receiving the same pay and benefits, check emails at least twice a day; try to meet a goal of having visual contact with each student a minimum of twice per week; and other measures. Those who are considered "essential staff" by the superintendent agree to report to work if the business of the district requires it. The school department also agreed to take whatever "precautionary measures" it can to prevent teachers' from being "videotaped or otherwise hacked… for ill purposes." Both sides also agreed to continue bargaining to decide how teachers will receive their evaluations.

In an email to his members, Parolisi said School Committee member Scott W. Wood Jr. reversed his initial concern after the two spoke and then won buy-in from fellow members Maura L. Ryan-Ciardiello and Toni Sapienza-Donais. The original agreement was negotiated by member Richard J. Rosa and Paul A. Magliocchetti and also received support from member Gail M. Sullivan.

While the union was successful in having certain stipends paid, it could not do the same for athletics. Parolisi explained, "We have unit members who coach baseball, softball, things like that, and those stipends aren't in our contract so we weren't able to protect that income."

Educators are expected to ratify the agreement during an online vote today. ◊

Aaron Canney, Nurse Manager at the Emergency Room of Holy Family Hospital, with Roger Snook, manager of Chick-fil-A in Methuen, donated Chick-fil-A sandwiches to the workers at Holy Family Hospital. Chick-fil-A also offered a free entre to health care workers, first responders, law enforcement and firefighters as well as home health aides in their drive thru for the month of April. ◊

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MED COUTURE

Deanna Milone Bonanno of Methuen, owner of Scrubs Etc. got together with "Healing Hands", one of her suppliers, and donated scrub uniforms and jackets to Lawrence General Hospital, Holy Family Hospital, and Nevins Nursing home. Deanna Milone said she was particularly happy to be able to help out Joyce Shannon, CEO of Nevins Nursing home whom she says is one of the unsung heroes in this coronavirus crisis. "We are happy to help all the health care workers," Milone told The Valley Patriot, "but it was even more special to help out Joyce Shannon who does so much for her residents and is so protective of her staff." ◊

The Tragedy at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home

Dear Residents,

The last few days have been very difficult for the Veteran Community because of the recent deaths related to COVID-19 at the Holyoke Soldiers' Home. (This Boston Globe article provides details of this tragedy.) There will be a lot of time to investigate and fix responsibility (I have requested an investigation), but unfortunately, there will likely be more deaths that could have been avoided.

For now, the focus needs to be on triage, sanitation, and taking care of the residents and staff at this facility.

The Governor has taken immediate action by replacing the current superintendent; augmenting the medical staff, some being experts on the treatment of COVID-19; and deploying members of the National Guard to expedite triage and to restructure the facility to prevent further exposure for the Veterans living there. Again, there will likely be more deaths suffered in days to come.

Apart from addressing the immediate crisis at the facility, we also need to use this tragedy as a wake-up call to deploy mobile testing units to elder care facilities throughout the Commonwealth as quickly as possible. (When testing capability is available, the National Guard will assist in getting this done.) I am thankful we are having regular interactions with Health and Human Services Secretary Mary Lou Sudders to ask questions and discuss coming challenges.

Please continue to reach out to me at linda.campbell@mahouse.gov or (617) 722-2380 with your questions and concerns, whether pertaining to your personal situation or questions regarding state actions to combat COVID-19. Thank you.

Most Sincerely,

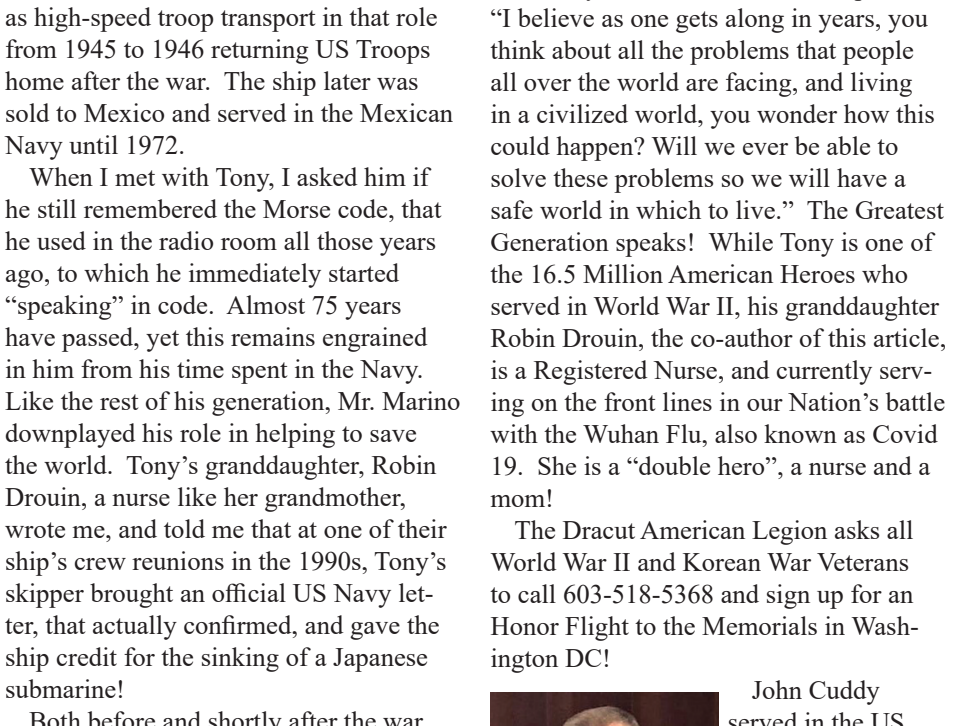
Linda Dean Campbell

State Representative, 15th Essex District

Chair, Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs ◊

HELP FOR VETERANS IN METHUEN

Thanks to Methuen Mayor Neil Perry, the Methuen CARES Program at the Loop includes a drop off and pick up center for veterans in the Merrimack Valley. Any veteran in need of food or services of any kind can call (978) 609-1866



HERO: FROM PAGE 1

such as Tony's DE-36, were transferred off their escorts to commission and crew newer ships. Tony became a "double plank owner", transferring to the USS Belet (APD-109/DE-599) which was another United States Navy destroyer escort and a ship that would later serve the US Military as high-speed troop transport in that role from 1945 to 1946 returning US Troops home after the war. The ship later was sold to Mexico and served in the Mexican Navy until 1972.

When I met with Tony, I asked him if he still remembered the Morse code, that he used in the radio room all those years ago, to which he immediately started "speaking" in code. Almost 75 years have passed, yet this remains engrained in him from his time spent in the Navy. Like the rest of his generation, Mr. Marino downplayed his role in helping to save the world. Tony's granddaughter, Robin Drouin, a nurse like her grandmother, wrote me, and told me that at one of their ship's crew reunions in the 1990s, Tony's skipper brought an official US Navy letter, that actually confirmed, and gave the ship credit for the sinking of a Japanese submarine!

Both before and shortly after the war, Tony worked for the railroad, the Boston and Albany and the New York Central. Preferring electronics to cleaning and icing dining cars, he went off to school to learn the trade. Tony left his well-paying railroad job, taking a risk, and entered the electronics industry, which was in its infancy in the 1940s and 1950s. He retired from AVCO in Lawrence, Massachusetts.

Loretta and Tony have a son and a daughter, four grandchildren, and ten great grandchildren. I had the pleasure and honor to meet some of them. As I sat with three generations of Tony's family, I realized that it was for them, his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, that he and his friends saved the world seventy-five years ago.

Several years ago, before any of us knew what the Wuhan Flu (Covid-19) was, Tony wrote in one of his scrap books: "I believe as one gets along in years, you think about all the problems that people all over the world are facing, and living in a civilized world, you wonder how this could happen? Will we ever be able to solve these problems so we will have a safe world in which to live." The Greatest Generation speaks! While Tony is one of the 16.5 Million American Heroes who served in World War II, his granddaughter Robin Drouin, the co-author of this article, is a Registered Nurse, and currently serving on the front lines in our Nation's battle with the Wuhan Flu, also known as Covid 19. She is a "double hero", a nurse and a mom!

The Dracut American Legion asks all World War II and Korean War Veterans to call 603-518-5368 and sign up for an Honor Flight to the Memorials in Washington DC!

John Cuddy served in the US Navy's Construction Battalions (also known as the Seabees) after retiring from the Navy; he earned a bachelor's in history and a master's in economics from the University of Massachusetts on the Lowell Campus. He has been employed in Logistics at FedEx for the last 23 years. If you know a World War II veteran who would like their story told, please email him at John.Cuddy@Yahoo.com. ◊

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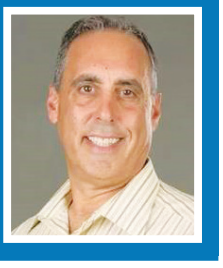

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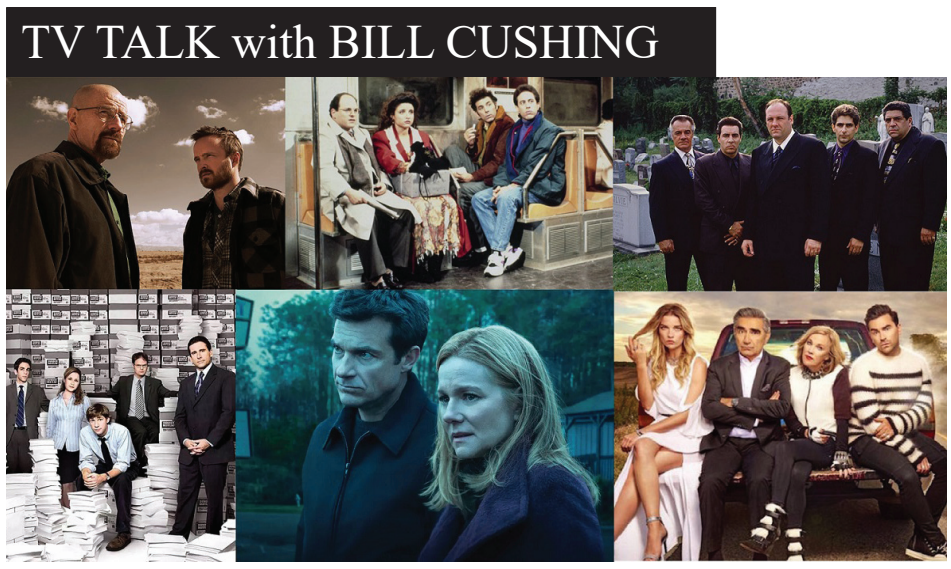

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The Best Shows to Binge Watch During "Stay Home" Days

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

We are in an unprecedented period in history, and these days we are looking for ways to keep occupied during this time. Sitting down with a good TV show to watch is a great way to pass the time. So I thought I'd give you some suggestions. Here are what I think are some of the best shows to be binge watching during your time at home.

Ozark – Jason Bateman and Laura Linney star as Marty and Wendy Byrd, who move to the Ozarks after a money laundering scheme goes wrong and they agree to launder money for a Mexican drug cartel to pay a debt. (Netflix, 3 Seasons, 30 episodes)

The Office – NBC's classic sitcom that depicts the everyday lives of office employees in the Scranton, Pennsylvania branch of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company. Steve Carell stars in the role that made him a household name. (Netflix, 9 seasons, 201 episodes)

Breaking Bad – AMC's classic show follows Walter White, a meek high school science teacher who transforms into a ruthless player in the local drug trade, driven by a desire to provide for his family after being diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. (Netflix, 6 seasons, 62 episodes, 1 movie)

Schitt's Creek – A wealthy family suddenly find themselves completely broke. With only one remaining asset, a small town called Schitt's Creek, the family moves there to start a new life. (Netflix, 5 seasons, 66 episodes. Season 6 currently airing on Pop)

The Sopranos – HBO's signature drama series stars James Gandolfini as Tony Soprano, a gangster who is trying to balance his family life with his role as the leader of a New Jersey crime family. (HBO On Demand, 6 seasons, 86 episodes)

Seinfeld – The show about nothing, considered by most to be the greatest sitcom ever made. Jerry, George, Elaine, and Kramer deal with the absurdities of everyday life in New York City. (Hulu, 9 seasons, 180 episodes)

Orange Is The New Black – Netflix landmark series about life behind the walls of a women's prison, and the many eccentric, unusual inmates serving time there. This critically acclaimed dramedy series was a game changer for streaming television. (Netflix, 7 seasons, 91 episodes)

The Americans – FX's incredible spy series centers on Philip and Elizabeth Jennings, two KGB spies in an arranged marriage who are posing as Americans in suburban Washington, D.C., shortly after Ronald Reagan is elected president. (Amazon Prime, 6 seasons, 75 episodes)

NYPD Blue – One of the most influential and praised network drama series ever. Steven Bochco's gritty police drama redefined cop shows and paved the way for many series to come. Dennis Franz stars as Detective Andy Sipowicz, one of the most memorable characters in TV history. (Amazon Prime, 12 seasons, 261 episodes)

Better Call Saul – This prequel to 'Breaking Bad' stars Bob Odenkirk, Jonathan Banks, and Giancarlo Esposito, reprising their roles from the original series. Six years before he begins to represent Albuquerque's most notorious criminal, Saul Goodman was Jimmy McGill, a small-time attorney hustling to make a name for himself. (Netflix, 4 seasons, 40 episodes. Season 5 currently airing on AMC)

The Wire – This series centers on the narcotics scene in Baltimore as seen through the eyes of law enforcers as well as the drug dealers and users. One of the most critically acclaimed series of all time. (HBO On Demand, 5 seasons, 60 episodes)

24 - Counterterrorism agent Jack Bauer fights the bad guys of the world, a day at a time. With each episode unfolding in real time, each season of "24" covers a single day in the life of Bauer. Kiefer Sutherland stars as Jack Bauer in his Emmy winning role. (Hulu, 9 seasons, 204 episodes. 1 movie)

Others to watch: Ray Donovan, Homeland, The Shield, Deadwood, Mad Men, The West Wing, The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel, Grace & Frankie.

Hopefully I've given you some stuff to watch while you are staying safe and healthy!

If you have any questions about TV you can email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future Mailbag column.

Follow me on Twitter @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at BillsTVTalk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion. ◊

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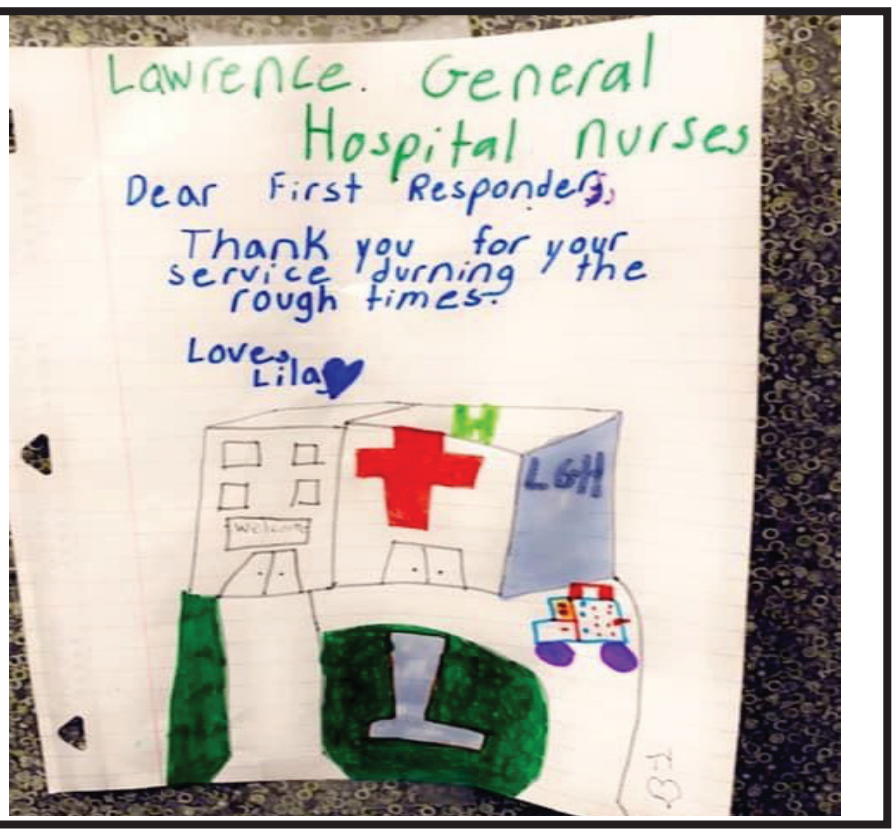

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BENEATH THE SURFACE

Coronavirus and the Pro-Life Instinct

Paul Murano
VALLEY PATRIOT MORAITY COLUMNIST

The overall reaction to the Wuhan virus pandemic reveals the pro-life instinct in human nature. It is natural to do whatever it takes to preserve innocent human life. If that means temporarily shutting down a city, a nation, or a world, so be it. We see this instinct unfolding in our society. We know intuitively that human life is precious, unique in each person, and invaluable in itself and to the world. Each individual person has more inherent dignity than does the entire universe.

Even though we know this on some level – a level easily accessible in children and often buried deeper beneath the surface in adults – when we're mired in sin we lose access to it. Hardened hearts cannot love, and they disable a person from seeing reality as it is – leading one to live a reality of one's own making, tainted with anger and full of contradiction.

This is why, in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, while everyone is racing to save lives, Planned Parenthood continues to kill them. Most of society except for hospitals, grocery stores, and gas stations are considered non-essential. Yet, in some states, killing preborn babies is somehow deemed essential. As companies, theaters, schools, colleges, restaurants, bowling alleys, and churches shutdown for the foreseeable future, abortion facilities remain open for business. We shut down society to save innocent lives, and yet in the midst of this we deem it essential to kill them.

Of course this is a contradiction. We know it makes no sense to be saving lives from a virus while at the same time killing lives from an abortion suction machine. It is inconsistent to ask everyone to sacrifice their lifestyles so that others may live, but not expect parents of preborn children to do the same. When innocent human life is involved, sacrifices are expected, even obligatory in some instances.

Many people now miss following their favorite sports teams, going to the movies or to the gym, and hanging out with family and friends. Many are sacrificing their birthday parties, graduation ceremonies, First Communions, Confirmations, and Baptisms; as well as their weekly paychecks, livelihoods, and dreams – all for the sake of saving innocent lives. We know intuitively self-sacrifice is worth saving lives. Why does this principle end at the womb – which was once the world's safest place to live? Why do some parents with unexpected pregnancies deny this basic instinct?

That this is a blatant contradiction is clear, obvious to those not psychologically active in pushing the door to their own hearts jammed shut. Denial of the pro-life instinct, one that is planted in every human being by God and nature, is unnatural. Yet, it takes effort, lots of negative energy. It's exhausting continuously to rationalize a false narrative every day in order to fool oneself into being comfortable with contradiction. There are countless people living this kind of charade, some without realizing it. You can see it on their faces and in their hearts.

Why are so many living this contradiction if it brings no peace and attains no happiness? Why the insistence of a mindset and lifestyle that inevitably brings inner unrest? Why do we do this to ourselves, and spread it to others like the spiritual virus that it is? This is the mystery of sin. It is an important mystery to ponder during these seasons of Lent and Easter.

Is it possible to overcome our bitterness, our vices, and the injustices done to us in order to live in peace and freedom? The Easter message has the answer: The message from the One who bore our sins and conquered death by the Resurrection on Easter gives a two-fold answer to that question: 'No', it is not possible to overcome it on your own, by our own natural power. And 'Yes', with God's help it is very possible, for it is the only reason He took on a human nature and bore our sins on the cross – to destroy sin and its hold on us.

All that's required from us is a humble heart, openness to God's life and a willingness to cooperate with it. We need not be slaves to our animosity, addictions, and contradictions. When we are true to our pro-life instincts, we make our own lives much more complete, responding to the Easter promise with a 'Yes' to Reality and its Creator.

Paul is talk host of Beneath the Surface video and radio podcasts, teaches college philosophy and theology, is a staff writer/producer for Church Militant, and a singer-songwriter-musician. Check out Paul's website at Paulmurano.com, and email: PJDM@aol.com

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Sue Piazza's Book Corner

"The Upside of Hunger, a True Tale"

by Roxi Harms
© 2018 Roxi Harms, Published 2020
Kindle Price $8.99, Paperback $19.00
Genre: Historical, Memoir
5 of 5 Bookmarks

Roxi Harms compiled this book after more than 400 recorded interviews with Adam Baumann.

The book begins with maps of Adam's childhood home, his childhood town, as well as one of his WWII journeys. Later on, we are given excerpts from 1940's German radio broadcasts. These additions help bring the novel to life and immediately draw the reader into this story and the life Adam lived.

We are given in-depth insight into Adam's childhood, how as a precocious child he was always getting into mischief (and feeling the strap) and looking for something exciting and different to experience. Avoiding boredom seemed a major impetus for the deeds he did. One action he undertook led him into the German army during WWII.

I've read many books written by U.S. military veterans, especially WWII veterans; this was the first one I read about a German WWII veteran. Towards the end of the war Germany had many teenagers in their military having had most of the older inductee's die. At 15 Adam joined the army ending up in the SS, the elite section though it is never explained how, as a teenager, he was allowed to become an SS agent. I would have liked to have learned this.

The reader is told about strict laws regarding the Jewish people enacted during this time. Some of the laws passed by Hitler: "The Decree on the Confiscation of Jewish Property," "The Decree on the Exclusion of Jews from German Economic Life," and the revocation of their German passports.

Throughout his childhood, teens, and later in life Adam tested the fates – and succeeded. Plans that others would not go along with, risky behavior, impossible odds, all worked out for him. He traveled to and lived in many countries. As an entrepreneur he started businesses, sold businesses, and throughout all this, supported his family.

Most books have a point they are trying to make, we learn the point of this book at the end of chapter six. "…some people need a little help in life and it's the responsibility of the ones who don't, to give it." Adam Baumann lived his life by this axiom.

The author's writing seems effortless. This novel reads like a tale one's grandparent would tell after a hearty Sunday dinner.

Even though there are 448 pages, the novel is a quick read mainly because the author has some very short chapters. In one case, a chapter is only a few paragraphs long. She treats different scenes as if she's writing a play. It seems like every scene change is devoted to a new chapter. It's an interesting stylistic method, and it works.

Check out her website, roxiharms.com, you will see that all profits are going to the "Upside for Hunger Scholarship Fund" that helps under privileged 12th graders who want to attend a university. Again, helping those who cannot help themselves.

Difficult to put down, I couldn't wait to finish reading it! I would definitely recommend this book. It is incredible and inspirational, and a rare glimpse into the ever-changing world of post-World War II Germany as told by the German man who lived it.

Susan Piazza, a Navy veteran, is an author, columnist, and blogger. She can be found at susanpiazzaauthor.com Her newly released book a historical fiction "A Bird Call That Isn't" can be found on Amazon at: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0829MHLRX You can follow her progress on: Facebook: "A Bird Call That Isn't launch" for more info. ◊

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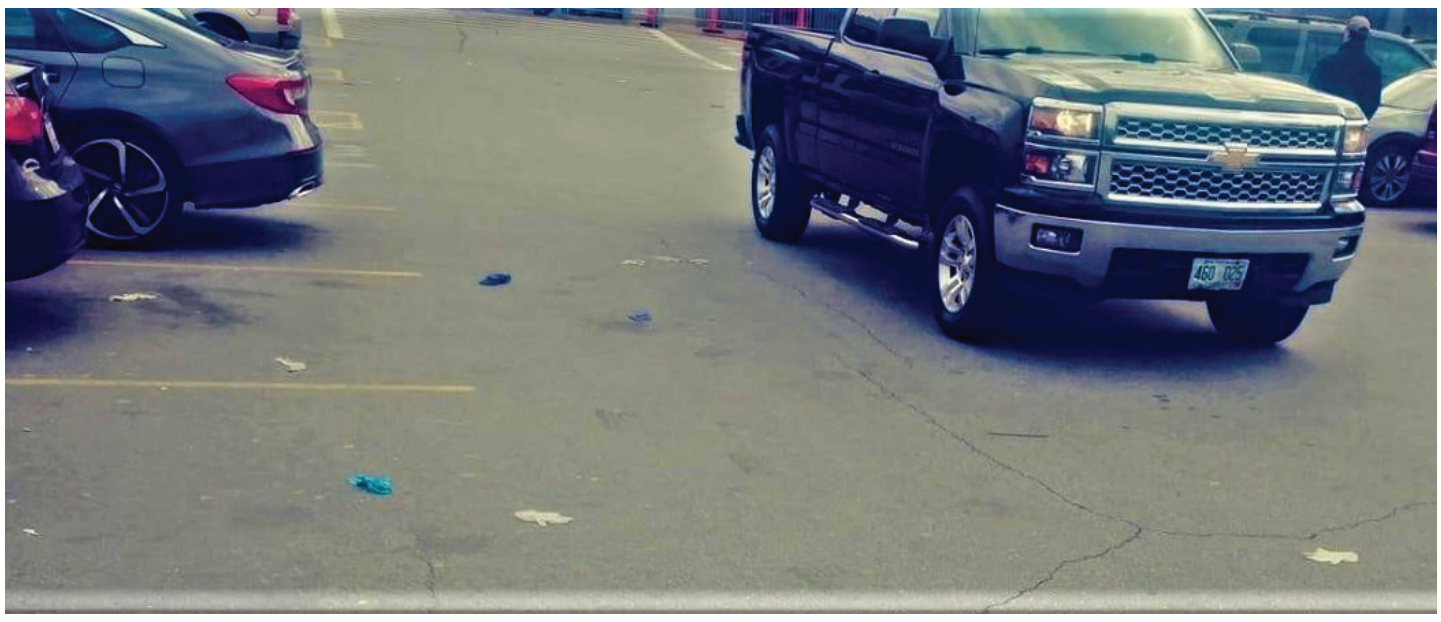
A HERO REMEMBERED

On March 16th, the 30th Anniversary of the tragic murder of Lawrence Police Officer Tom Duggan, Sr. (1990), Lawrence Police Chief Roy Vasque had the flags lowered to half-mast for a solemn ceremony to commemorate the service and sacrifice of Officer Duggan (right). Duggan served 18 years on the Lawrence Police Department. Present for the ceremony were Officer Duggan's sister Dorothy Duggan-Incropera, brother-in-law and former shift commander Lt. Frank Incropera, and son Thomas Duggan Jr.

Salem Police Remind Residents to Properly Dispose of Masks, Gloves



The Salem Police Department has noticed an increase of improperly disposed gloves in parking lots in town. Pictured above is the Walmart parking lot in Salem. (Photo courtesy of the Salem Police Department)

SALEM, New Hampshire -- Deputy Police Chief Joel Dolan and the Salem Police Department are reminding residents to properly dispose of gloves and masks.

On Friday, April 3, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended that all individuals going out in public wear cloth face masks as precaution in situations where social distancing is hard to maintain, such as grocery stores and pharmacies, in order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing is the practice of keeping at least six feet between people while in public.

While not recommended by the CDC at this time, some residents have also been wearing latex or other types of disposable gloves as a precaution when coming in contact with highly touched surfaces, such as door knobs and tables.

"In the recent weeks, we've noticed an increased number of improperly disposed gloves in the parking lots around town," Deputy Chief Dolan said. "While we encourage residents to take the necessary steps to protect themselves from COVID-19 should they need to leave their homes, improperly disposed of face masks and gloves poses both a health and environmental risk to our community."

Gloves and masks should be properly disposed of in trash cans or other types of waste receptacles. Residents may also consider keeping an extra plastic or paper bag in their car to put the used gloves or masks in temporarily if a trash bin is not immediately available.

Information about how to properly remove and make your own face mask can be found on the CDC's website here. Information about how to safely remove gloves can be found here.

Individuals found to be improperly discarding of materials can be subject to a fine of up to $1,000.

Late last month, Gov. Chris Sununu announced a stay at home recommendation for residents and ordered all non-essential businesses to close in-person and public-interacting operations until at least Monday, May 4.

Essential businesses such as grocery stores and pharmacies will remain open during this time. Residents will be allowed to go outside, but are strongly urged to practice social distancing while doing so.

Other recommend steps residents can take to stymie the spread of all communicable viruses are:

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, including under your fingernails. Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol content) can be used when soap and water are not available.

Keep your hands away from your face.

Cover your nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing with a tissue and discard it immediately. Cough into the sleeve over your elbow instead of your hand. Wash your hands often when coughing and sneezing.

Stay away from people who are sick and stay home when you are sick.

For more information, visit the Town of Salem website by clicking here, the NH DHHS website by clicking here and the CDC's website by clicking here.

If you have COVID-19 specific questions, the State of NH has established a call center to assist you, which can be reached by calling 211 or 1-866-444-4211.

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